



NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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No. 269.

Price, Five Cents.

NICK CARTER'S ADVERTISEMENT

OR A NEW WAY TO CATCH A CRIMINAL



BY THE AUTHOR OF
"NICK CARTER"

"STOP!" CRIED YOETTE, "I'LL SHOOT THE FIRST ONE OF YOU THAT MOVES!"



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OR,

A New Way to Catch a Criminal.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

A CRIMINAL'S CLEVER RUSE.

Two men fighting furiously in the dark.

Chairs and tables are overturned and fall to the floor with clatter and crash.

The men have grappled, and lunge this way and that across the room.

"Give me the diamond, or I'll kill you!" hisses one, in a strange language.

"I tell you I haven't got it," the other replies. "If I had it I shouldn't be here."

This exchange of words takes place while each is trying to stab the other to the heart.

They stumble together against a door.

The second speaker, who is familiar with the place, pulls the door open and slips through, trying to shut it in the face of the other. He does not succeed.

The first man clings to him, crosses the threshold with him, and kicks the door to.

As it slams into place there is a great crash in the room from which they have just come.

The sound tells its own story clearly to the first man.

Somebody has burst into the room, breaking down the door to do so.

"It must be Nick Carter!" the man mutters, while he keeps on fighting in the dark. "If he gets in here it will be capture and perhaps death for both of us!"

The other man hears the sound of the breaking door.

He knows that it means pursuit, but he does not know of Nick Carter.

All he understands is that he has a deadly foe in his grasp, and that another foe is coming.

He makes a last fearful effort to get rid of his unseen enemy.

His right arm is free for an instant.

He raises it high and brings it down with all his force.

There is a dagger in his hand.

It seems that the first man perceived the danger of such a blow in the dark, for he leaps suddenly aside.

Down comes the weapon.

The point hits an iron shelf over the fireplace.

Snap! the weapon breaks in two close to the hilt.

The blade falls to the floor.

With a curse the man who held the dagger drops the hilt.

The blade falls to the floor.

Now that he is free from his enemy, and also unarmed, he turns to another door that he knows of and runs out.

His enemy lets him go without effort to grapple with him again.

Instead of keeping up the fight, the man leaps toward the spot where he heard the dagger blade fall ringing to the floor.

"It is the only chance for escape," he mutters. "I don't know my way in this house, and he'll be on me in a few seconds."

Luckily, his hand touches the blade of the dagger at the first try.

Reaching out across the floor, he finds the broken handle also.

Somebody is already trying to open the door through which he came with his enemy.

Another instant and that somebody will burst the door in as he did the other one.

"It's the only way," the man mutters, again.

With the quickness of a cat, he drops to the floor.

The broken blade of the dagger is under him.

He lies on his back, placing the handle of the dagger upon his breast in such a way that, if it could be seen, it would look as if the blade had been driven in up to the hilt.

His head is thrown back, eyes and mouth are wide

open, but motionless, one leg is drawn up, and he clutches with both hands at his breast, as if he had tried to pull the dagger out while a spark of life remained in him.

No sooner has he assumed this position than the door is battered down.

A man rushes in.

The newcomer halts for just an instant after crossing the threshold.

Then there is a sudden bright glow from a pocket lantern that he holds in his hand.

The light shows him one of the criminals he is after lying apparently dead, stabbed through the heart.

He gives but a glance at the supposed dead man and hurries on to capture the one who is yet alive.

The instant the newcomer is gone, and the room is again in pitch darkness, the man rolls over.

He tips up the edge of the carpet and tucks the dagger blade and handle beneath it.

Then he rises and darts silently into the room where the fight began.

From the rooms beyond he hears sounds that show that the detective who flashed a light on him has met with resistance.

He chuckles triumphantly at first, and then hesitates.

A new fear has come upon him.

Will not the detective be forced back into this part of the house? There seems to be no escape through the door that the detective burst open, for already steps are heard outside.

Tenants of the house have been awakened by the racket, and are coming to see what is the matter.

Even now there is one coming in at the door.

The criminal cannot see him, but he hears his burly form stumbling over the upset chairs.

Then the criminal who had feigned death as the only way of escaping from the detective, sees only one way of escaping from this new situation:

Instant attack.

He acts on it immediately.

With one leap he has come to the man who is stumbling through the room.

He raises his own knife to strike.

Just then they both hear the voice of the detective speaking to those who stand in his way in the room beyond.

They hear these words:

"I am an officer."

The criminal's arm seems paralyzed for a moment.

He has recognized that voice.

"I thought so," he silently says; "it is Nick Carter!"

The man against whom he leaped hears the words also.

He does not know who Nick Carter is, but the word "officer" maddens him.

A curse comes from his lips as he tries to break away from the criminal's clutch.

"An officer!" he repeats. "I'll kill him!"

This gives the criminal a new thought.

Why not let this man go, in the hope that he will attack the brave detective from behind and get him out of his way forever?

It is a good idea.

He lets go suddenly, and leaps aside.

The other man, confused and angry, stumbles on toward the room where the voice was heard.

Then the criminal makes for the broken door, meaning to go through it to the stairs, and so out of the house.

But there are many steps on the stairs.

He hears the sound of many angry voices.

It will be too risky to face all that number on the narrow stairway.

No one could hope to fight his way through unharmed.

Every second's delay here is full of danger.

He gives up thought of the stairs and feels along the wall of the room.

Ah! his hands touch glass.

It is a window.

He raises it quickly.

Outside it is almost as dark as within.

There is barely enough light to show that there is nothing between the window ledge and the ground.

The criminal crawls through, lets himself hang a moment, and drops.

* * * * *

Such was the clever and desperate ruse by which Jan Pallog escaped from Nick Carter in the very heart of Whitechapel, London.

Pallog was a Roumelian traveler. He had found a diamond of enormous value in far-away Borneo and had got possession of it for the Queen of Roumelia.

He said he had bought the diamond from a savage king.

Many persons doubted this story, believing that Pallog had obtained the stone by fraud.

However that might be, he had passed through New York with it on his way to his native country, and had been tempted by the value of the stone to pretend that it had been stolen.

The Carter detectives were engaged to investigate the matter, with the result that Nick quickly suspected Pallog himself as the thief.

They laid a trap for him, and Patsy, by some very clever detective work, got possession of the stone while crossing the ocean in the same steamer with Pallog.

Patsy delivered the diamond to the Roumelian minister in London, who sent his messenger to Amsterdam to talk with diamond cutters there about preparing the stone for the queen's crown.

The messenger was mysteriously murdered in a railway car at Charing Cross.

Meantime Pallog, who had been arrested, had escaped from prison.

Everybody but Nick Carter believed that Pallog was the man who murdered the messenger.

Nick saw evidence pointing to a native of Borneo, who, it was believed, had been following Pallog over the world in the hope of taking the diamond away from him.

It proved that Nick's theory was correct.

Pallog himself had the same theory about the murder, and, besides, he believed that the black man from

Borneo had taken the wonderful diamond from the messenger.

So he had hunted for the black man, had found him in a Whitechapel lodging house, and had attacked him for the purpose of getting the stone again.

There was where Pallog made a mistake.

The black man did not have the stone, for the murdered messenger did not have the diamond with him at the time of his death.

Nick, following close upon the trail of both criminals, Pallog and the black man, came upon them in the manner described while they were having their deadly battle in the dark.

The detective was completely deceived by Pallog's ruse.

He went on to capture the black man, and did capture him, believing all the time that the black had killed Pallog.

The drop to the ground was a short one, and when Pallog landed he was only a little shaken.

He stumbled a bit and then dodged into a doorway.

The place was a court between buildings.

It was irregular in shape, and narrow, crooked alleys led from it in several directions.

One of them, as Pallog knew, led to Whitechapel road, the main street of that district.

Where the others led he did not know.

It was so dark that he could not even see where the entrances to the alleys were.

One thing he was sure of—he did not care to go through the alley that led to Whitechapel road.

Pallog could hear their steps and voices in the alley toward the main street.

Policemen would likely come in that way, too.

A couple of men hurried past him.

"Wot's the row, Bill?" one was asking.

"Dunno; murder, likely," the other replied.

Pallog could have reached out and touched them.

After they had gone on he darted across the court to the building on the other side.

There again he got into a doorway and waited a moment.

The coast was clear in the direction away from the main street.

He felt along the walls until he came to an opening.

It led apparently straight into a house, for it was covered, like a hallway.

But it was stone paved, and Pallog knew that it must have an end at some court, or alley.

Like most of the passages thereabout, it was crooked.

Cautiously he advanced and rounded a bend.

Then he discerned a faint glow.

Proceeding more boldly, he came out presently, as he had expected to, in another court.

This was lighted by a single street lamp in one corner.

At that corner was the entrance to another passage.

Pallog didn't like the looks of it.

"Probably leads to the main street," he thought.

He was not yet ready to go into a well-lighted street, for he was too near the scene of the fight, and he was not sure that his clothes were free from blood.

He thought he had cut the black man more than once in the struggle with him.

In that case, not only his clothes, but his hands and face would be likely to have marks that would arouse the suspicions of policemen.

He wanted no trouble with them.

As he had escaped from the Old Bailey prison that morning, he knew that every policeman would be on the watch for him.

So Pallog turned away from the alley by the light.

There was an opening that seemed to be very like the one he had just come through on the further side of the court.

He could see it only dimly and could not be sure whether it was a public passage or an open doorway.

Before he had made up his mind what it was, he heard steps coming rapidly up the alley near the light.

Instantly he darted forward and slipped into the

The moment his foot passed from the court he knew that he had made a mistake.

This was not a stone pavement, but a wooden floor.

He would have retreated, but strong arms reached out in the darkness and grasped him.

CHAPTER II.

HELPED BY A HAG.

Pallog had put away his dagger.

He feared to be seen with it in his hand after getting out of the lodging-house.

There was a revolver in his hip pocket, but he did not care to bring all the police of the neighborhood against him by using it, unless he had to.

He had been caught by the throat and shoulder.

For an instant he stood perfectly still.

He offered no resistance whatever.

It was a man who had grasped him, and it was a man's voice that demanded:

"Wot the mischief ye tryin' to do? an' who be ye?"

Saying this, he didn't relax his grip on Pallog's throat.

The traveler could neither answer, nor breathe.

Nevertheless, he stood perfectly still for a moment longer.

Then he caught the hand that held his throat, tore it away, grasped the unseen man under the armpits, lifted him up and hurled him back into the darkness.

It was a feat worthy of Nick Carter himself.

The unseen man bumped against one thing and another, and there was a great clatter of pans, kettles and crockery when he came down.

He gasped loudly, and another voice spoke.

It was harsh, but evidently that of a woman.

"Lor' bless us!" it said; "wot's hup?"

Pallog had no intention of answering.

Indeed, he meant to slip out again, but two things made him hesitate.

First was the infernal racket the man had made when he went stumbling and falling across the room.

It might have waked everybody in the building

round about, and that would have made Pallog's escape difficult.

Second, the woman struck a match as she spoke.

Its flame lighted the room enough for Pallog to see and be seen, and he thought it best then to stay and face the consequences.

His keen mind quickly formed a plan for turning the situation to his advantage.

The woman touched the flame to a candle wick.

It caught, and she held the candle up level with her eyes and peered at the stranger.

What Pallog saw was a most villainous hag.

She was not old, but her face was wrinkled, her hair loose, her clothing a dirty collection of rags.

He also saw, a little beyond her, a man seated on the floor, his knees up, his hands spread out beside him, his back against the wall.

All around him were broken dishes and upset pans that had fallen from a table with which he had collided when Pallog threw him.

He sat there motionless, staring in the greatest wonder.

Scoundrel though he was, Pallog could not help a smile of amusement.

"Don't stand there and grin like a monkey!" snarled the hag. "Tell us who ye be, and wot ye mean by tearin' into a peaceable 'ouse at dead o' night. Come, now!"

"I made a mistake, madam, that's all," responded Pallog, politely. "I thought your doorway was a public passage."

He raised his hand to his head to take off his hat, and was surprised to find that he was bareheaded.

That fact he had not noticed before.

His hat must have dropped off during the fight, or while he lay pretending death.

The hag noticed his movement and seemed to understand, for there was an evil gleam of satisfaction in her eyes as she demanded again:

"Who be ye? wot be ye? says I. Speak hup!"

Pallog looked quickly over the place.

He noticed the poor furniture, the filth, the vile expressions on the faces of both man and woman.

"Criminals of the lowest class," he thought.

Aloud, but softly, he replied:

"Madam, I am a lifter."

"A lifter!" she repeated; "aha! I thought as much."

She went closer to him.

"Good clothes," she muttered, "if they are mussed up. An' you've got arms, 'aven't ye? an' 'ands, too?"

She said this with plain admiration in her hoarse tone.

Then she raised the candle near his face.

"Arms that can lift," she went on, peering sharply at him, and 'ands that can 'it 'ard, an' a face that—
ah! a face that 's blood on it! Ah! blood on 'is face! There's been trouble, trouble an' blood, eh?"

Pallog stood her examination coolly, though, in spite of his own villainous heart, he felt like shuddering when she looked at him.

She turned sharply to the man who still sat where Pallog had thrown him.

"Get up, Jack, ye paralyzed bloke!" she commanded, in a whisper, "get up an' shut the door."

The man arose then and obeyed, staring in wonderment at Pallog as he passed.

"Now, mister man," said the hag, "there's one kind of lifters an' there's others. Mebbe you're one kind an' mebbe you're playin' a dodge. No matter, says I, if the hofficers are hafter ye, we're with ye, Jack an' me. But ye see, to begin with, ye've smashed my dishes an' ye've spoiled the little game we'd been puttin' up fer to git our breakfast."

Pallog did not fully understand all this, but he answered readily:

"The officers are after me, madam. I've had a close shave, as you can see. I am glad you have seen blood on my face, for that tells me that I must wash it off before I go further. As for your dishes, I shall be very glad to pay you your own price for them if you will kindly let me have a basin of water and a towel."

She nodded her head from time to time as she spoke.

The candle was still held at a level of her eyes.

At last she set it on the table, seeming to be satisfied with her examination.

"Jack," she said, "stir round, now. Make yerself useful. Get the gent a drop of water an' suthin' to wipe 'is face with."

The man bestirred himself stupidly.

He had not yet got over his surprise at the way Pallog handled him.

While he was getting a washbasin ready, the hag sat on a stool and said:

"We ain't up to your game, Jack an' me, we hain't. That's clear enough from the cut of your rig. We 'ave to lie low fer wot comes our way."

"Was that what you were doing," asked Pallog, "when I blundered in?"

"Hit were. We keeps the door hopen of a dark night like this, and hoften hit 'appens that a swell bloke comes reelin' in. The swells come down to Whitechapel to see wot it's like, d'ye mind? An' they gits loaded an' don't know where they're goin'. Many a one of 'em 'as come in 'ere."

"Do they mistake the door for a passage?"

"That's it. We lie low an' when they git inside we grab 'em. Then I lights a light an' Jack puts on the 'igh an' mighty an' talks of callin' in the police."

She stopped to chuckle as if she remembered some incident of the sort that amused her.

"I suppose the fools give up handsome, don't they?" asked Pallog.

"Depends on 'ow much they've got," she answered. "Hif a man 'as as much as a sovereign left, 'e's generally glad henough to get rid of it to save bein' taken in by the hofficers. Hif 'e hain't got that much, we takes wot we can get, Jack an' me does."

"What if he tried to bluff you?"

"Hit don't work, that's all. We manage to git the money, one way or hanother."

By this time Jack had brought a basin of water and a rag that he called a towel.

Pallog, used to roughing it, made use of it without a murmur. He washed his face carefully, slapped

the dust from his clothes, and then asked for a looking-glass.

"Huh!" grunted the hag, "you'll 'ave to go further fer that. Wot do you take us fer—fashion plates? P'raps you'd like to borry me peral 'andled brush an' me silver comb."

"No," said Pallog, smiling. "I can get along without them, but, tell me, do I look all right?"

"Purty as a picter."

"No nonsense, now."

"Straight, mister."

"Fit to be seen, eh?"

"Sure!"

"Blood all gone?"

"Every bit."

"Wot was it all about?" asked Jack, speaking for the first time since Pallog threw him.

The hag did not give a chance for an answer.

"Hidiot!" she hissed, turning to Jack. "Wot do ye want the gent to give hisself away fer?"

"I don't want 'im to give hisself away," muttered Jack, uneasily, "I was only wonderin', that's all. Hif 'e's one of our kind——"

"But 'e hain't, don't you see? 'E's a top-lofty member of the perfesh an' you're only a hignorant scaramouch. Huh! you keep yer tongue in yer 'ead, Jack."

"The question does no harm," said Pallog. "I simply had a scrap with a man who wants to see me again more than I want to see him, unless——"

"Hunless 'is back is turned?"

"Yes."

The hag laughed hideously.

"You're the right sort!" she croaked.

"I think so, but if anybody comes along here asking questions, you haven't seen me; understand?"

"Hof course! I'm not thick. Jack is, but I'll answer fer 'im, never fear."

"I don't. Will this fix up your broken dishes?"

Pallog handed her a ten-shilling piece.

"'Andsome!" she cried, greedily. "You can smash hup wot there is left hat the same rate, if you like."

"Thank you; I've hit enough things for one night, but there's one thing more I'm going to hit before I got to bed."

"Wot's that? the bloke wot's hafter ye?"

"No, not unless he gets in my way."

"Then——"

"Never mind, madam. Better keep my cribs to myself, hadn't I?"

"That's right. Don't peep to nobody. That's my rule."

"Good-night, then."

"Good luck to ye, gent."

Jack opened the door, and Pallog stepped out.

Then he remembered something and turned back.

"I say," he said, "I've lost my hat."

"I seen that," said Jack.

"What? My hat?"

"No; that ye hadn't got none."

"Well, haven't you got something that will do for me to wear in the dark?"

"I dunno; mebbe."

"I'll give you half-a-crown for anything that will stay on my head."

The woman spoke up:

"Let 'im 'ave your hown 'at, Jack. You can git another in the mornin' fer a shillin'."

Without another word, the man brought out a badly-battered hat and gave it to Pallog.

The latter paid the half-crown he had promised, and started away.

That part of the district was quiet now, and he went down the lighted alley.

It brought him to a narrow street that led to Whitechapel road.

He did not dare yet to be seen there, so he wandered about through alleys and passages for several minutes.

When at last he took the chance of going to the main street he was a long distance from the scene of his adventure with the black man and the detective.

A number of persons were on the street, although it was past midnight.

None of them paid any attention to him, and still he felt a little doubtful about his appearance.

It was not quite time for drinking places to shut up for the night.

Pallog went into the private bar of a public saloon.

Having called for his favorite drink—brandy—he took his glass into what was called the “sitting-room.”

This was a room with chairs and tables behind the bar.

A man and woman were drinking ale there, and they sat directly in front of the only mirror in the room.

Pallog crossed to the farthest corner so that he might get a glimpse of his reflection in the mirror as he passed.

His heart chilled when he saw his face.

He sat down, and his hand trembled so that his liquor spilled.

It was not that he saw blood on his face.

The hag had spoken truly when she said that all signs of his struggle had been washed away.

The trouble was that he saw his own face, undisguised.

When he made his escape from prison he had worn a false beard, and shortly after that he had still further modified his appearance so that he felt sure no one would recognize him.

In his struggle with the black man, or in his flight afterward, he could not tell when, the beard had been lost.

The washing of his face had done the rest.

He wondered what had become of the beard.

“If it dropped off in one of those alleys,” he thought, “the detectives may find it.

“That will give them a clew to the direction I took.

“So they may come to the place where Jack and his hag wife live.

“They’re not to be trusted to keep my secret.

“A coin will buy their information.

“They can tell which direction I took, and then it wouldn’t be hard for a shrewd detective like Carter

to trace me, for I have been seen by a hundred persons.

“Carter may be on my track now!

“But perhaps he has been killed.

“I hope so, but it won’t do to take chances.

“If I want to keep my liberty and get that diamond, I’ve got to act at once.

“The black didn’t have it. That is certain.

“Then the messenger he killed didn’t have it.

“That means that the stone must still be in the possession of the Roumelian minister.

“Fortunately, I know his house address.

“That’s my crib, and I must crack it before daylight.”

He paid for his second drink and went out, feeling as if every person in the place and on the street were looking at him.

CHAPTER III.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

Once more he took to side streets and alleys until he came to a station of the underground railway.

Trains do not run all night on this line, but Pallog found that he was in time for the last train westward.

It was due in six minutes, and that short time seemed like an hour.

Every second he feared that one of the waiting passengers would prove to be a detective.

He quietly changed his revolver from his hip pocket to the side pocket of his coat.

Then he kept his hand in that pocket, grasping the butt of the weapon, with his thumb on the hammer, prepared to bring it forth any instant and shoot the man who should lay hands on him.

It was lucky for those passengers that none of them spoke to him.

Pallog was so excited, and so determined to keep his liberty, that he would have shot a man who asked him the simplest question.

When the train came he got into a compartment where there were no other passengers, and stayed

there until a stop was made at Earl's Court, a station in that part of London known as Kensington.

He got out there, and he became more confident as he passed through the station without attracting notice.

The streets in that part of town were deserted.

A short walk brought him to a street on which were a number of private houses.

It was here, somewhere, that the Roumelian minister lived.

Pallog knew the number, but he had never been to the house, and his first step was to walk through the street to get a general idea of the place.

He found that without exception every house had a garden in front of it.

None of the gardens could be seen, because there was a high wall running along the street front.

In some places this wall was of brick, in others of stone.

Here and there trees and bushes showed over the top.

From one side of the street he could see the house fronts on the other.

This fact showed that the houses were placed far back from the sidewalk.

It was also possible to see that the top of the high wall was guarded everywhere by broken glass, cemented to the stone or brick.

There was a gate, or door, in the wall in front of every house.

Sometimes the entrance was the full height of the wall, and in other cases it was like an ordinary door reaching only part way up.

In every case the gateway was covered with jagged glass at the top.

The reason for this was to prevent just what Pallog wanted to do—climb over the wall.

If it hadn't been for the glass he could have leaped up, caught the top of the wall and pulled himself up.

Then he could have dropped down on the other side.

As it was, he could not have leaped up without the certainty of cutting his hands badly.

Such a thing as that was not to be risked.

He was not discouraged, however.

As he went along the street he looked for a piece of board, or anything that might be propped against the wall and so enable him to get his hands on the top carefully.

"I could knock off a little of the broken glass," he thought, "with the butt of my revolver, and so get a place where I could hang on without cutting myself."

He found the minister's number and saw that his wall was guarded like the rest.

From end to end of the street he went, and could not find so much as a stick to help himself.

Back he went to the minister's house, and stood in front of it for several minutes, thinking.

That wasn't getting ahead very fast.

"Perhaps," he thought, presently, "some shopkeeper near the station has left a box on the sidewalk. Or I might manage to unhook a sign and use it as a step ladder."

He started back toward Earl's Court.

On the way he met a policeman.

The officer was walking slowly along, trying the doors and gates in the garden walls to see that they were properly fastened.

Pallog walked briskly.

"Good-evening, officer," he said, as they passed.

"Good-evening, sir," responded the policeman.

Pallog halted at a corner and stepped into the shadow of a gateway.

From there he watched the policeman go the whole length of the street and then disappear round a corner.

"All right," thought the criminal. "He's doing his duty and he won't trouble this street again tonight. That danger is out of the way."

He was about to go on again when he saw that he was observed.

A man stood half-leaning against a lamp-post, looking at him.

Pallog could not see the man's face, but he noticed that his shoulders were rounded and that he had his hands in his pockets.

The man wore a cap that was drawn down over his eyes.

For a moment Pallog hesitated.

His old fear of pursuit by a shrewd detective had come upon him.

He fingered his revolver.

Then he slowly approached the man.

The man did not stir, and when Pallog was close he saw from his slouchy appearance that he was either a drunken loafer or a crook.

Pallog halted directly in front of him, and for a moment they looked silently at each other.

"Nice evening," said Pallog, presently.

"Huh!" grunted the other, "that depends."

"It isn't dark enough for some things, eh?" Pallog demanded.

"It might be darker."

"But the policeman on this beat has got out of the way."

"Yes; 'e won't be back."

"And it isn't likely that any other will come along before daylight."

"That's so."

"Then don't let me stand in your way if you've picked out a crib along here that you want to crack."

At this the man took his hands from his pockets and came a little closer.

"I'm onto you," said he, in a low tone. "You needn't try to take a rise out of me. I know you."

"So?"

"I don't mean that I never seen you before, but I'm onto you. Wot was you spottin' that hofficer fer? That's wot I says. Wot was it?"

"Why," responded Pallog, easily, "to see if he did his duty. That's all."

"Duty! huh! you've been pipin' off a crib on your own account. Needn't tell me."

Pallog laughed lightly.

"We're two of a kind, aren't we?" he asked.

"Mebbe. I'm not sayin' hanything."

"No, and that's right, but I am. Now, listen: I'm going to make you an offer."

"Wot is it?"

"There's a friend of mine lives in one of these houses back here."

"Well?"

"I want to give him a surprise."

"Huh!"

"He doesn't know I'm going to call on him."

"An' you don't mean to leave no card. Well?"

"His gate is locked, and so I've got to get over the wall."

"Uh-huh. Why don't you?"

"Because—but you know."

"Dunno. I never tried it."

"Rubbish! you know all about garden walls. I want you to be my ladder."

The man shrugged his shoulders and slouched away a few paces, with his head down.

Pallog let him go.

Presently the man halted and came slowly back.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Yes. You can skip as soon as I'm over. I'll do the job inside alone."

"Wot do I get out of it?"

"It's worth a shiner to me."

In the slang of London crooks a "shiner" is a gold piece worth ten shillings, or about \$2.50 of American money.

"Let's see it," said the man.

Pallog took a ten-shilling piece from his pocket and showed it in the light of the street lamp.

The man looked at it greedily.

"It's a go," he said.

He held out his hand.

"Not yet," said Pallog, putting the coin in his pocket. "Work first and pay afterward."

"I won't take no chance on bein' bilked."

"I won't bilk you. Let me get on your back and the shiner is yours."

"All right."

Back they went to the minister's gate.

"Now, then," whispered Pallog, "let's make a quick job of it."

"I'll take my pay now," muttered the man.

"You shall have it. Stoop."

As he spoke, Pallog put his hand in his pocket.

The man squatted on the walk close to the wall and held up a hand.

"Here you are," said Pallog, reaching down a bright coin.

The man's hand closed over it.

Pallog stepped on his shoulders.

"Rise, now!" he whispered.

Slowly and with great difficulty the man stood up.

He was no athlete.

His body quivered and he clung to the wall as well as he could while Pallog's weight was on him.

"'Urry!" he whispered, eagerly, "fer 'eaven's sake, 'urry! I cawn't stand it forhever!"

Pallog's head was level with the top of the wall.

He reached his arm across it and broke off two pieces of jagged glass that stood higher than the rest.

They fell silently upon the grass inside the garden.

Then, with his elbows on the cleared space, he raised himself, and in a moment was on his knees on top.

He did not pause there, but, taking pains that his clothing should not be torn by the glass guards, let himself over the other side and dropped.

The man who had acted as Pallog's ladder ran panting down the street to the nearest lamp-post, where he stopped to look at the bright coin that had been given him.

His jaw dropped and his brow wrinkled in a savage scowl.

"Curse 'im!" he muttered, "if 'e 'asn't rung me fer a fard!"

By "fard" he meant farthing, the smallest piece of money coined in England.

It is of copper, and is worth one-half of an American cent.

When fresh from the mint a farthing is very bright.

As it is almost exactly the same size as a gold ten shilling piece, it is very easy to mistake one for the other when there isn't time for a close examination.

The man hadn't examined the coin at all when Pallog handed it to him.

He had simply closed his hand over it, believing it

to be the "shiner" that had been shown him a minute before.

Whether Pallog tricked him purposely cannot be said.

It might have been a mistake, and that seems likely, for the shrewd criminal would hardly have taken the risk of making a dangerous enemy for the sake of saving a few shillings.

But whatever the explanation, the thing was done.

The man glared at the almost worthless coin a moment and then threw it angrily on the ground.

"The cussed bilker!" he muttered.

He shook his fist at the house where Pallog was.

At that moment a startling noise began there.

A number of bells began to ring, there was a loud buzzing sound, and above the racket came the sharp crack of a pistol.

"Blow me," chuckled the man by the lamp-post, "hif there ain't a burglar halarm on that 'ouse, 'an the bloke's gone an' set it off! Serve 'im proper right, the bilker!"

He could hear sounds that indicated that men were running about in the house and garden.

"I 'opes they catches 'im!" he muttered.

Then it struck him that perhaps there would be danger for himself if he staid near, for the police would come soon.

He picked up the farthing he had thrown away and started to run.

Then he heard a slam, and, turning his head, saw a man running away from a garden gate a little beyond the one in front of the minister's house.

It was Pallog, undoubtedly.

The criminal had somehow escaped the inmates of the house he had tried to enter.

He had either jumped over the wall into another garden or had found an open gate.

Then he had gone out through a street gate that could be opened without a key from the inside.

So much was clear enough, and for a moment the man with the farthing was disappointed.

He had hoped that the criminal would be captured.

Then he had a new idea.

It didn't come very quickly, for his mind was slow.

But he thought of getting even with the fellow who had bilked him.

So he pursued Pallog, at first with the thought of helping the police, and then deciding to catch up with the fugitive and demand ten shillings in return for the farthing.

All that was well enough to think about, but it was another matter to catch up with Jan Pallog.

The man chased him to a long street that led to the central part of Kensington.

Pallog never stopped running, and the man followed as best he could, without gaining a yard.

At last he lost sight of the criminal, but he kept running, and did not halt until he came to Kensington High street.

Then he looked around.

At a little distance he saw a hansom cab drawing up at the curb.

A passenger was climbing in.

The man recognized Pallog again and ran toward the cab.

The cab started before he came to it.

Pallog was then standing in the front part, speaking to the driver over the roof.

"To Euston in a hurry," Pallog said.

The man with the farthing didn't know what to do.

"Curse him!" he muttered, again and again. "If I should yell out and bring the police I might get pinched for 'elpin' 'im hover the wall. An' 'e wouldn't pay me, anyway, the mean bloke. Oh! I'm a dead straight loser, I am."

CHAPTER IV.

A TIP FOR NICK CARTER.

What happened in the minister's house can be told quickly.

The first known of anything wrong was when the burglar alarm went off.

Everybody was aroused by the racket.

Servants rushed from their rooms with revolvers.

The minister himself dressed hastily and went downstairs to the front door.

Meantime one of the servants had caught sight of a man running around the house.

He was making toward a side gate that led into a neighbor's garden.

The servant fired his revolver.

He was so excited that he shot wild.

The bullet did not come anywhere near the criminal, who pushed open the gate and went through.

It proved later that the gate had not been quite closed.

Once through it, the criminal shut it behind him.

Then it was fastened by a spring lock.

As it was a solid gate, like a door, there was no use in firing through it.

None of the half-dressed servants had a key to the gate.

One ran back to the house and brought a key.

By the time the gate was opened Pallog had gone out by the front gate of that garden.

The servants hunted around in the bushes and in the angles of the house, and after a time they went out to the street.

Pallog was then far on the way to the place where he found an all night cab.

The minister and his servants were still hunting for the burglar when a couple of policemen came up on the run.

They had been warned by the alarm that connected with the station where they belonged.

Behind them came a hansom cab.

It halted at the minister's gate, and two men got out.

The minister had come down to the sidewalk to speak to the policemen.

He was telling them what little he knew about the affair when he saw the newcomers.

"By all that's lucky!" he exclaimed. "Mr. Carter!"

"Yes," said Nick.

"And the young man, too," added the minister, shaking hands with Patsy.

"We captured the man who killed your messenger," Nick explained, shortly, "and, as Pallog is still at large, we came here to warn you. He's likely to come here in the hope of getting that diamond, and he isn't the man to lose any time about it."

"I think he got here ahead of you, Mr. Carter."

"I see that something has happened. You've had a call?"

"Yes. Our burglar alarm frightened him away."

"Did anybody see him?"

"Nobody who could identify him. There was just a glimpse of a man escaping into the next yard."

"It must have been Pallog," said Nick. "He's a swift one. Less than three hours ago I saw him lying dead, as I supposed, in a Whitechapel lodging-house."

"Dead!"

"I will explain that later. I had other things to do just then, and left him. A few minutes later I discovered that he had come to life and disappeared."

While he spoke, Nick was stooping just inside the garden wall and feeling of the grass.

Now he arose with a piece of broken glass in his hand.

Looking up at the top of the wall, he said:

"This is where he got over. He must have had an accomplice."

"That's an unpleasant thought, Mr. Carter," responded the minister. "It's bad enough to know that we have to be on our guard against Pallog alone."

"He couldn't have got over that wall without help," said Nick, quietly. "You'd better make up your mind that there was an accomplice."

"Very well, but who——"

"I cannot tell."

Nick was talking very rapidly.

"How about the diamond?" he asked, in a low tone.

"It is safe, Mr. Carter."

"Sure?"

"Oh, yes. The man didn't get into the house. I had the stone in my bedroom."

"Where is it now?"

"In my pocket."

"Very well."

"Shall I show it to you?"

"No. I must get on the trail of Pallog. Was it that garden he went into?"

"No; the one on the other side. That gate——"

Nick did not wait to hear the explanation, but ran along the sidewalk to the gate opening into the garden of the next house.

He had taken his pocket lantern out for the purpose of hunting for footprints.

Before he opened the slide he observed a dim form slinking into a gateway across the street.

Instantly he flashed the rays of the lantern in that direction.

The bright rays showed him a startled man who was trying to squeeze himself into the shadow of the gatepost.

Nick kept the light on him and crossed.

The man was so astonished and frightened that he could not stir.

"What are you doing here?" Nick demanded, sharply.

He saw a shabby-looking man, with a cap pulled down over his eyes.

The fellow's teeth were chattering.

"Nawthin, nawthin," stammered the man, "so help me, I was just goin' 'ome, I was."

"You don't live around here," said the detective, "and this isn't on your way home. Come, now, speak up!"

"I just turned down 'ere to see wot all the row was about."

"Oh! that was it."

"Yes, sir, so 'elp me!"

Nick looked at him sharply.

Meantime the policemen and some others had come up.

"Ha!" exclaimed one of the officers, "that must be the man we're after, Mr. Carter. I know him for a common thief."

"I'm innercent, so 'elp——" began the man.

"Let him alone, please," Nick interrupted. "If he knows anything about the matter he'll tell me. Won't you?"

This was addressed to the trembling thief, who stared back in a frightened way, without replying.

"Stoop over a minute," said Nick, then, "and turn your back to me."

With a look of awful fear, the thief obeyed.

Nick brought the lantern close to his shoulders, beckoned to the policemen and pointed with his finger.

They all saw clearly a broad mark of dirt on each of the thief's shoulders.

The policemen would have spoken, for they saw what the marks meant, but Nick motioned to them to be silent.

"My man," said he, "you've been playing ladder."

The thief shuddered and turned about, still kneeling.

"Lor' bless me!" he stammered, "but you've gone an' guessed it. That's right, but I didn't go fer to do it. I was 'ired, I was, an' the bloke rung up a fard on me fer a shiner."

"Not quite so fast," said Nick. "Don't be frightened. I sha'n't trouble you if you tell the truth, the whole truth, mind! You say you were hired."

"Yes, sir. The bloke said 'e would give me a shiner. I knowed it were wrong, but I needed the money that bad! an' 'e went an' did me fer a fard. See!"

He held up the bright, new farthing.

Nick could not help smiling when he saw the coin and understood exactly what had happened.

"Well," said he, "you don't feel very kindly about that fellow, do you?"

"That I doesn't, sir! To tell ye the whole truth, I was comin' back 'ere, 'opin' to give the police a tip. 'E'd ought to be ketched, rot 'im! but you scared the life out o' me with your searchlight."

"That's too bad, but you've got your life back again. Now, tell us the tip."

"Well, sir, I chased 'im up to Kensington 'Igh street, and seen 'im get inter a cab. 'Euston in a 'urry,' says 'e to the driver, an' away they went like a streak."

Nick was silent for a moment, waiting to see if the man had anything more to say.

"That's all, so 'elp me, sir, an' I wishes it was more."

"Surely you don't believe him, Mr. Carter," whispered one of the policemen.

"I do."

"But he's a bad egg. He lives by thieving."

"Did he ever commit a great crime?"

"Bless you, no! he hasn't got the wit for it."

"Of course, and that's why I believe he tells the truth. That man Pallog wouldn't have anybody around him who wasn't sharp. So I believe he picked this fellow up by accident and used him just as he says."

The policeman shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

"Now," said Nick to the thief, "I'm going to have you locked up."

"Couldn't you let me off this time, sir?" the thief whined.

"I'm going to let you off. I sha'n't bring any charge against you, but I want you as a witness."

"Oh!"

"You'd know that man again, wouldn't you?"

"Sure."

"Then you'd better go with the officers and stay quiet a few days. It won't be long before I will let you go."

"All right, sir, but I don't want to be chucked into quod any more'n any other man."

"Take care of him," said Nick, to the officers, "and understand that he is detained simply as a witness."

The thief was led away, and Nick took the minister and Patsy aside.

"Pallog," said Nick to them, "is on his way to Scotland."

The minister looked surprised.

"You have proved to be a good guesser," he began.

"I'm not a guesser," Nick interrupted. "I simply believe the tip I have just received."

"I don't see how you get Scotland out of it."

"Very simply. There is a mail and newspaper express train that leaves Euston station for the North at about this hour. Pallog has gone to Euston. It follows that he knows about that train, and that he means to take it. It offers him the quickest and best means of getting far from London."

"I see."

"Of course, he may leave the train at some station,

but, as he has been so completely defeated in his operations in London, it is more likely that he will get as far away as the train will take him."

"What do you propose to do, then?"

"Follow him. I understand that you are willing to meet any expense that is necessary?"

"Decidedly yes."

"Good. He is a very sharp man. As long as he is free he will try to get that diamond."

"That's just the trouble, Mr. Carter. He might double on his tracks and come back here at once."

"I am thinking of that, and I will leave my assistant, Patsy, with you. My other assistant, Chick, is also in town and will be at your service."

"That makes me feel easier."

"But you'd better deposit the stone in the Bank of England as soon as it opens for business this morning."

"I will do so."

"Good-by, then. I sha'n't try to catch the early express, for that would be impossible. Indeed, there is a chance that Pallog may miss it, but in either case I don't feel that I've any time to lose."

"Good-by, then, Mr. Carter. Shall I hear from you?"

"When I have caught Jan Pallog."

CHAPTER V.

FALSE HOPES.

Nick got into the cab by which he and Patsy had come to Kensington, and told the driver to go to the cab stand in Kensington High street.

The cab business in London is run by a thorough system. Drivers have to report at certain stands scattered about the city, and they go out from these stands in regular order.

When Nick came to the High street stand he asked the man in charge of it about cabs that had gone out within a half-hour.

Only three had gone within that time.

One was called for by a gentleman who was known to the keeper, the other started westward on the chance of picking up passengers, and the third had started eastward for the same purpose.

Nick believed that this last cab was the one that Pallog had taken.

He asked its number.

"1704," replied the keeper.

It was then almost the time when the early express was due to leave Euston station.

The detective drove to a telephone office and rang up the station master.

"Has the Scotch express gone?" he asked.

"Just pulling out," was the reply.

"Did a passenger come in at the last minute?"

"Yes, a man."

"Can you tell me whether his cab is still in the station?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I am a detective."

"Oh! hold the wire a minute."

Nick waited until he heard the station master's "Hello."

"Hello," he returned.

"The cab is here."

"What number?"

"1704."

"Tell the driver to wait for me."

"Very well, sir. Anything else?"

"Yes. Can you arrange for a special train to follow the Scotch express?"

"Why, I think so. The track will be clear at this time of night."

"Get one ready, then. A swift locomotive and one carriage. I will be at the station as soon as I can drive there."

"Very well, sir, but——"

"But what?"

"We have to pay in advance for specials."

"I will hand you the money as soon as I arrive."

"Oh! I will have the train ready as soon as possible, sir."

Nick got into his cab again, and, after a rapid drive, arrived at Euston station.

There was only one cab in the driveway.

It was number 1704.

The detective spoke to the driver, asking him to describe the passenger he had taken from High street.

The driver gave a fair description of Pallog.

"That's all," said Nick, and he gave the man a coin to pay him for the time he had lost in waiting.

"It's all right," he continued to himself. "I'm on the right track. Now to see whether my man actually got aboard the train."

He questioned the men in the ticket office and the station porters.

From what they told him he became satisfied that Pallog had got aboard the train and that he had not left it when it rolled out of the station.

Then Nick looked up the station master.

"I am the man who asked for a special," he said.

"Oh! it will be ready in five minutes, sir."

"Very well, I'll pay now."

This part of the business was settled quickly, and Nick then asked:

"Can the special overtake the Scotch express?"

"No, sir," replied the station master, "not unless the express meets with an accident."

"Can we gain on it?"

"That might be, sir."

"Tell the engineer and conductor, then, that I want to get into Edinboro as soon as possible after the express."

"I will, sir. Do you want to go through without stops?"

"No. I want to stop everywhere the express stops."

"That isn't often, sir. Stops are only made to take on new engines. The mail and papers are thrown off in passing stations."

"So much the better, but I want to make every stop the other train makes, and I shall want time enough to ask some questions."

"I think that can be arranged, sir. And I have put three carriages on the train instead of one. That will steady it and allow higher speed. But you will be the only passenger."

At that moment the special backed into the station and Nick got aboard.

Little need be said of the journey northward.

Nothing happened to interfere with the progress of the special, and there were no clues from the conversations Nick had with men at the few stopping places.

He always asked about passengers who had got off the Scotch express.

So far as he could learn, nobody answering Pallog's description had left the train.

It was about the middle of the following afternoon when the special halted for a moment at a junction a mile or so from the Edinboro station.

Nick got out and called to the conductor.

"How far behind the express are we?" he asked.

"The express got in fifteen minutes ago," replied the conductor.

"Good. Run in the rest of the way without me."

"Without you, sir?"

"Yes. Be careful not to let any information leak out about my coming on the special."

"None of us will say anything, sir."

Nick crossed the tracks, climbed a bank and soon found himself on one of the city streets. A moment later he had taken his place in a cab and was being driven rapidly to the central part of the town.

He was thoroughly disguised, and so had no fear of being seen by Pallog.

What he hoped was that luck would be on his side, and that he might see Pallog walking along the streets.

"Even if he goes straight to a hotel," thought Nick, "he isn't likely to stay indoors after such a long journey. He can't dream that he is being pursued so close. I should think he would take a walk."

Luck did not favor the detective.

He had his driver take him down to the railway station, where he made careful inquiries as to the passengers who had arrived by the express.

It was difficult getting any definite clew there.

A good many passengers had left the train. The station is a gloomy place, and it is often very dark at midday, owing to the smoke from locomotives.

A passenger might easily leave a train and go from the station without being noticed by anybody.

It was quite possible, too, that Pallog had managed to disguise himself while on the way.

The long and short of it was that Nick learned nothing of value at the station.

He got into his cab again, and had the driver take him about the city until dark.

Then he went to a hotel and had dinner.

He telegraphed his address to Patsy and soon afterward got a cipher reply.

When translated it read:

All quiet here. The crown diamond is safe in a vault in the Bank of England.

Nick believed that Pallog would lie low for several days before going back to London.

It did not discourage him that he had not come upon a trace of the man since he had been in Edinboro.

He had hardly begun his search yet.

Time and again Nick had discovered criminals by simply wandering around a city till he came across them.

That was to be his plan now, and, as Edinboro is not a very large city, he felt almost confident that he would meet his man before midnight.

"Pallog has to drink," thought Nick. "He'll go to some rum shop, at least."

Perhaps the detective was a little wrong in his reckoning there.

He didn't realize what a fearful dread of Nick Carter was in Pallog's mind.

The criminal had learned to respect all the Carters mightily, and wherever he was it was safe to say that he was constantly in terror lest Nick or one of his assistants should jump on him.

But it was not certain that Pallog had come to Edinboro.

Even if he had, it was not certain that he had staid there.

He could have started back to London, which was very unlikely, or he could have taken a train for some place further north, which was possible, or he could have slipped over to Glasgow, which city is distant only on hour's journey from Edinboro.

Nick had wandered around the town till after midnight.

He was beginning to think that perhaps he would do better to run over to Glasgow.

"I think I know the man well enough to be sure that he won't go to any small town," he thought. "A city is the place for him. And the last train for Glasgow has gone by this time."

The detective was in what is known as the old town of Edinboro at this time.

That part of the city is built on a ridge that slopes very steeply to the valley lying between it and the newer part of the city.

Most of the way the slope is too steep for streets, but there are many narrow passages between the buildings.

Sometimes these passages, which the Scotch call "closes," are nothing less than flights of stone stairways.

Alleys lead from them on each side.

It happens that most of the rough people of the city live in the buildings along the closes.

There are many saloons scattered among the alleys.

Nick had visited every one he could find.

Nowhere had he come across anything that gave him a hint that Pallog was in the city.

"I'll take one more trip," he said to himself, "and if nothing turns up I'll go to my hotel and see if a few hours of sleep will freshen me up."

He started slowly down the first passage he came to.

It was a badly lighted place and one of the steepest.

When he was part way down he saw a man coming stealthily up the stone steps toward him.

As he had done more than once that evening, the detective slipped into the shadow of a doorway and waited.

There was something in this man's movements that seemed like Pallog, and Nick wanted a nearer view.

He didn't get it.

He had hardly got into the doorway when the man turned squarely and disappeared in a cross alley.

"No, you don't!" said Nick, softly. "I'll get a look at you if I have to go through the houses to find you."

Softly but swiftly he descended the stone steps and went into the alley.

There was no light of any kind in there.

All the houses were shut up, and, as the sky was clouded, the detective could not even see how far the alley extended.

He paused a moment and listened.

A few paces away were faint clicking sounds, and a fainter noise as if two pieces of metal were being scraped against each other.

Nick knew what that meant.

Somebody was trying to unlock a door.

Either the lock was out of order, or the key did not fit, or the man was working with a skeleton.

Once before in his pursuit of Pallog, Nick had been guided by the sound of picking a lock.

That fact gave him greater confidence now.

"At his old tricks!" he said to himself.

Nick crept into the alley so softly that the man fooling with the lock did not hear him.

The sounds continued steadily.

All at once there was a louder click.

The bolt had been thrown back.

A faint creak told that a door was being pushed open.

The detective leaped.

In the darkness he caught hold of an arm.

With a savage oath the unseen man whirled about.

His fist smashed hard on Nick's face.

Up came Nick's left.

The detective was almost dazed by the blow he had received, but when his fist landed it was followed by a loud gasp.

The unseen man's wind had been knocked out of him.

There was plenty of fight left in him, however.

He tried to trip his foe, and he lunged repeatedly in the dark with his fists.

Nick soon managed to catch the fellow's throat.

Then the man brought up both hands in a frantic attempt to tear away the detective's grip.

It was of no use.

Nick held on and dragged him along the alley to the close.

There was a little light there from a distant street lamp.

By it the detective saw at once that he had taken the wrong man.

This was not Jan Pallog.

CHAPTER VI.

A LINE IN THE PAPERS.

The detective released his grip on the man's throat, but stood over him in such a way that he could master him again if it should be necessary.

It was well that he was on his guard.

The instant he felt himself freed, the man began to struggle.

"Let me alone!" he cried. "There'll be murder if you don't."

As he tried to draw back for the purpose of hitting at Nick, a burglar's jimmy dropped from his coat pocket.

"All right," said Nick, coolly. "I made one mistake in thinking you were another man, but I won't make another mistake by letting you go."

There was another sharp encounter, at the end of which the detective had the man's wrists inside a pair of American handcuffs.

When he saw that further struggle was useless, the man became very quiet.

Nick led him up the alley.

On the main street of the old town he soon found a policeman.

"Do you know this man?" he asked.

"Know him!" echoed the officer. "I should say so. He's an old offender. What——"

"I caught him in the act of entering a house below here."

"Good! but who are you?"

"I'll go along with you to the station and explain. Better send a man down to the house to close the door. He had got it open when I jumped on him."

The policeman wonderingly acted on this advice.

He rapped on the pavement with his club and in a moment another officer came hurrying to the spot.

He was told briefly about the open door, and went down to attend to it.

Nick and his prisoner went with the other policeman to the station.

Then the American detective explained who he was to the officer in charge.

"I'm on a very important case," he said, "and it won't do at all to let my man get wind of the fact that I am anywhere near Edinboro. So let this policeman have all the credit of the arrest and be very careful not to let my name get mixed up with it."

The officer thanked him for causing the capture of a criminal whom the Edinboro police had been looking for for a week or more, and promised to keep the secret.

Then Nick went to his hotel in the new town.

Early in the morning he went to Glasgow and spent most of the day wandering around in that city.

Toward evening he was back in Edinboro without the slightest clew to Pallog.

He still believed that the man had come to Edinboro, and he could not help thinking that he was still there.

Meantime he had had a new idea.

"If I can't find him in any other way, I'll advertise for him," was Nick's thought.

That was certainly a new way of getting hold of a criminal, but Nick's way of advertising was rather new, too.

As soon as he got back to Edinboro he made a call on Craigie & Sons, the leading jewellers of the city.

He had a long talk with the members of the firm and afterward visited all the newspaper offices.

When this had been done he said to himself:

"As I didn't come up here to catch Scotch thieves, I'll keep off the streets to-night."

He spent the evening at a theatre, and went to bed early.

Next morning every newspaper had a paragraph that read as follows:

A wonderful diamond, said to have been obtained in Borneo, was brought to England recently and delivered to the Minister of Roumelia for the purpose of having it set in the crown of the queen of that country. The stone is almost perfect as it is, but a little cutting will be necessary. It is understood that the contract for cutting the diamond has been given to our townsmen, Craigie & Sons. At first it was supposed that cutters either in London or Amsterdam would be employed, but the stone was brought to Edinboro yesterday and is now at the warerooms of Craigie & Sons, on Prince's street. The diamond will be placed on exhibition there as soon as the work of cutting has been finished.

This announcement appeared as news, but it had been paid for by Nick Carter; and that was his advertisement.

"If that line in the papers don't fetch him," thought the detective, "it will be because he isn't in Edinboro."

All that day the detective was in the store of Craigie & Sons.

He appeared to be a bookkeeper, but he sat at a desk where he could see everybody who entered the store.

The desk was near a window, so that he could also see any who paused on the sidewalk to look in.

Many persons came in to congratulate the firm on getting the important contract.

All of them asked to see the stone.

"We would rather not show it until it has been put in perfect condition," was the regular answer.

The store did a big business that day.

People were drawn there by the news about the diamond.

Often there was a crowd at the counters.

Nick watched sharply, thinking that Pallog might take advantage of a time when there was a crowd to come in.

It seemed to be another case of false hopes, for when the business day was over the detective had to confess that he had seen nobody whose face or movements aroused his suspicions.

"But he'll come—if he's in town," said Nick.

The store was closed at six o'clock.

At that hour all the employees went home.

The detective remained in the store.

He sat where he could see the front door without being seen from it.

About twenty feet from him was the big safe where precious stones were locked up for the night.

Nearer was the door leading to the private office of the firm at the back of the store.

There were windows in the private office that looked out on a court.

For eight hours Nick Carter sat motionless.

It was one of the longest waits that he ever had.

When two o'clock came, and nothing had happened, he began really to believe that he would have to think up some other plan.

Then, five minutes later, he heard a scratching noise in the direction of the private office.

He did not stir.

The noise was repeated after a moment.

It was followed by a sound that told of straining woodwork.

There was a low but sharp crack!

Something had broken.

Silence for a full minute followed.

Still the detective sat motionless.

In one hand he had his revolver; in the other his pocket lantern.

Another sound came.

This time it was a steady scratching.

"All right," thought Nick, "it will take you longer to get in that way, but it will make less noise, and I can wait, thank you."

He had sized the situation up in this way: The burglar at work on the rear window had tried first to pry it up with a jimmy.

The window had proved to be fastened so securely that it would take great force to open it.

That would mean a good deal of noise.

The burglar then had decided to cut out a part of the glass near the window catch.

That would enable him to reach his hand in and turn the fastening almost silently.

The scratching noise, therefore, was due to the work that was being done with a glazier's diamond.

For some minutes the scratching continued. At last there was a break, and a bit of glass fell almost noiselessly on the carpeted floor of the office.

Nick could not see the burglar, but he could tell what he did by the low sounds of his movements.

It was clear that he reached his arm through the opening he had made and turned the catch.

Then the window was pushed up and a man crawled in.

He paused to put the window down again, and then moved cautiously across the office.

"He must know the store," thought the detective, "for he isn't looking for the safe in there."

Next instant the burglar stepped from the office into the store itself.

A very little light came in from the street.

Nick could barely distinguish his form as he passed almost within reach.

The detective waited until the burglar had knelt before the safe.

He was taking tools from his pocket and laying them on the floor beside him.

Then Nick stood up.

He meant to do so noiselessly, but he had been sitting still so long that his legs were stiff for a moment.

That caused him to kick his chair just a little.

The noise was very slight, but it was enough for the burglar.

He leaped to his feet.

Nick knew that a shot would follow and he swiftly prepared for it.

Holding out his pocket lantern in his left hand at arm's length, he touched the spring.

Instantly the slide opened.

The light fell straight on the burglar.

The detective saw at the first glance that it was Pallog!

At the same instant Pallog fired.

Naturally, he aimed toward the light.

He supposed that the detective held it in front of him.

With quick aim he shot a little over the mark.

The bullet, therefore, flew into the wall harmlessly.

Nick's quick movement had saved his life.

Hardly had Pallog pulled the trigger when Nick fired.

He was determined to capture the slippery criminal alive.

So he shot to disable Pallog.

Pallog's revolver dropped from his hand.

"Curse you!" he cried, fiercely.

Nick set the lantern on a showcase.

"Better surrender, Pallog," he said, quietly. "The game is up."

"Not by a long sight!" retorted the criminal.

He whipped a long knife from his belt and stood in a threatening attitude.

"If I shoot again," said Nick, "I shall make you my target."

"I know it, but you won't shoot," hissed Pallog.

"No? What makes you think so?"

"You want to take me alive."

"That's a good guess."

"You'll never do it."

"We'll see. I shan't let you use that knife on yourself."

"On myself!" laughed the criminal, hoarsely. "I don't mean to. The knife is for you, my smart man. You can kill me, but you'll have to shoot to do it."

"You mean to fight, then?"

"I do. It's the last time, Carter. It will be you or me this trip."

Pallog's eyes glowed like fire in the light of the lantern.

His body was swaying from side to side.

He seemed like a tiger preparing to spring upon his prey.

"Very well," said Nick, laying his revolver on the showcase beside the lantern, "I'll meet you on your own terms and take you alive."

Pallog was startled to see the detective give up his weapon.

He suspected a trick of some kind.

Swiftly he started back.

He forgot that he was so near the safe, and he stumbled against it.

With a mighty leap the detective was upon him.

But not before Pallog had time to raise his knife arm.

The blade flashed in front of Nick's face.

With his old-time alertness he dodged and caught the arm that held the dagger.

He had beaten many a desperate criminal in that way.

This time neither his quickness nor his strength ended the matter at once.

Nick found that he had met his match.

Pallog had the strength of a giant and the desperate fury of a madman.

He did not try at first to get his knife free, but clutched at Nick's throat.

The detective caught that hand also, and for a moment they stood, breathing into each other's face.

The criminal was held firmly, and the detective could not let go.

Nick had one advantage, and only one—he was perfectly cool.

Pallog was excited.

Give him time and he would be sure to make a slip.

Ah! he suddenly tripped Nick, and they fell together to the floor.

The detective was under.

Clinging like steel to Pallog's wrists, Nick raised himself on his heels and shoulders, lifting the criminal with him.

Then he gave a wrench and a roll, and both fell over on their sides.

In vain Nick sought for a chance to let go and give the man one settling blow.

The criminal knew too much to give that kind of an opening.

He was trying to maim the detective by kicking, and he tried also to fasten his teeth into Nick's wrist.

The detective let him try at that for a moment, and then suddenly let go with both hands.

It was a desperate and dangerous experiment.

If Pallog had been quick enough, he could have buried his long blade in Nick's heart.

For one instant he was too surprised to take the advantage offered him.

Then it was too late.

Nick was leaping to his feet.

Almost as quickly, Pallog was up, too.

As he rose he drew back his arm for another blow with the knife.

That was what Nick wanted.

He rushed in without trying to dodge the blow.

Both fists shot out.

One landed on Pallog's chest, but it was partlywarded off by the criminal's left hand.

The other caught him squarely under the ear.

The blow that was falling stopped short.

Nick nevertheless leaped back to avoid it.

Pallog was lifted clean off his feet by Nick's terrible drive.

He fell backward, striking the showcase where the lantern was as he went down.

There was a loud crash, and the lantern went out. Then silence.

Pallog was unconscious.

The silence was very short.

It was followed by a rattling at the front door.

Policemen had heard the pistol shots, and for the first minute or two had been trying to find where they came from.

At last they had heard the noise of struggle in the store of Craigie & Sons.

They looked in just at the moment when Nick's lantern was dashed to the floor.

The detective let them pound and rattle for a moment.

He wanted to be sure that Pallog was done for before leaving him.

The quick-witted rascal had tricked him once before, and Nick did not intend to be caught the second time.

So he knelt over the man, felt of him, saw that he was really stunned, and then, to make perfectly sure, slipped bracelets on both hands and ankles.

Then he went to the door and unlocked it, a key having been left with him by Mr. Craigie.

"Come in," he said; "you're just in time to help lock up the most desperate criminal in Great Britain."

CHAPTER VII.

CHICK'S MISSION.

About noon of that day, Nick started back to London.

Pallog was safely locked up and waiting to be tried for burglary on a charge made by Craigie & Sons.

The members of that firm were well pleased with the results of Nick's scheme.

Their store had been well advertised, and the detective settled with them generously for all the damage that was done during the struggle with the criminal.

It was understood that as soon as Pallog had served his time on the burglary charge he would be handed over to English officers, to be tried for his first theft of the diamond and for his escape from Old Bailey Prison.

"These matters will keep him locked up for a long time," said Nick to the Scotch officers, "but if he lives out his sentences, send word to America and I will charge him with attempted murder. He tried to kill one of my assistants while crossing the ocean, and I'd like to see him punished for that."

It may as well be said right here that it isn't likely that Nick will ever bring a charge against Pallog, for that man was sentenced to prison for life when he was tried a few weeks later in Edinboro.

It still remained to get the troublesome diamond to the place where it belonged.

Nick had that matter in mind during his journey to London, and as soon as he arrived, he went to the Roumelian minister's house.

Both Patsy and Chick were there.

He told them briefly what had happened in Scotland, and then said:

"I imagine that something is wrong here. I didn't expect to find both my assistants in this house."

"They are here at my request," said the minister. "I have become quite nervous since you went away."

"Is the diamond——"

"Perfectly safe, Mr. Carter. It is in the Bank of England."

Nick looked inquiringly at Chick.

"The house is shadowed by a black man," said the latter.

"Ha!" exclaimed Nick, "the one who committed suicide just after I captured him hasn't come to life, has he?"

"No. It's another who looks enough like him to be his brother."

"Ah! when was he seen first?"

The minister answered:

"On the evening of the day you arrived in Edinburgh. I saw him idling in the street when I came home from my office, but I said nothing until after Patsy had sent you a telegram to say that all was quiet. Then I told him, and thought you ought to be informed."

"And I told him," put in Patsy, "that you had left me here to take care of just such things as that."

"That was right. What else?"

"I have seen the black several times since," replied the minister; "once near the office, at other times here. He was loafing around the neighborhood this evening, and so I asked both your assistants to pass the night here."

"Has he spoken to you?"

"No."

"And I suppose he hasn't done anything that would justify putting him under arrest."

"Not a thing."

"If he had," remarked Chick, "he would be locked up now."

"Of course," said Nick. "I think I understand it. I don't wonder you are nervous about it. As I said long ago, it would be quite like those savages in Bor-

neo to send more than one man around the world to recover that stone."

"You think there is another one, then?"

"I certainly do. They stuck to Pallog until they were sure he hadn't got the stone."

"Then one of them murdered your messenger in the hope of getting it."

"Now another is watching you for the chance of following the stone wherever you send it."

"I haven't a doubt that this black man knows that the diamond is at this moment in the Bank of England."

"He will be on hand when it is taken from there and he'll make trouble for the man who carries it."

"Good gracious!" groaned the minister, "what am I to do? It seems like condemning a man to death to send him with that stone to Roumelia, and yet that must be done. I can't keep it."

"I've been thinking about that on the way from Scotland," said Nick. "If the stone needs cutting can be done in Roumelia. The queen can send to London or Amsterdam for cutters to go to Roumelia to do the work there under guard."

"That's true, but who is to be asked to undertake the danger of carrying the stone to Roumelia?"

"Well, Patsy and I have had our share of work in this case. I think it's Chick's turn."

"Correct!" exclaimed Chick, sitting up suddenly. The minister opened his eyes wide.

"You don't mean that you would ask your assistant to take his life in his hands——"

Nick interrupted with a laugh.

"My assistants are doing that all the time," he answered, "and Chick is eager to go. Ask him."

"That's right," said Chick. "I feel as if I'd been on vacation for a couple of weeks and I'd like work."

"Well," said the minister, "I am glad you have offered to do this. I wanted to ask you, but was afraid you'd think I was asking too much."

"Then that's settled. Chick and Patsy may stay here to-night, though I am very sure nothing will happen. In the morning Chick will go with you to the Bank of England and get the diamond. He will start for the Continent immediately afterwards and that will end it."

"I am afraid not, so far as Chick is concerned."

"Trust Chick to take care of himself."

Nick had a short talk with Chick before he went to a hotel.

"Whatever happens," said Nick, "let this be the last of our connection with the diamond. I have no doubt you will deliver it safely to the queen, but manage it so that there will be no further trouble about it."

Chick smiled queerly, and they parted.

Next morning, according to arrangement, Chick and the minister went to the Bank of England.

The wonderful diamond was brought up from a vault and handed to the minister, who gave it to the detective.

"I feel as if it was your death warrant," he said, gravely.

"Oh, no," replied Chick, lightly, "I sha'n't let myself get hurt."

"I am glad to hear you say so. Really, I would rather the diamond were lost than have you or anybody else come to harm on account of it. The thing has caused enough trouble and bloodshed already."

"I think this will be its last trip," was Chick's response.

As they left the bank, Chick saw a black man standing on the opposite sidewalk.

He was looking toward them, but he immediately turned about and walked away.

The minister did not happen to see him, and Chick said nothing of the matter.

They went in a cab to Charing Cross railroad station where Chick bought a ticket for Paris.

They had timed their movements so that he had not long to wait for a train.

Chick got aboard at the last minute, and he was interested to observe that no black man was among the passengers.

The minister shook his hand warmly as the train started.

"Telegraph me the instant you arrive safe," he said.

Chick promised to do so.

There was nobody with him in the compartment, but the minister had insisted that the detective should have a room to himself.

The train was an express to Dover, with only one stop.

That was at the Mansion House station.

Charing Cross station is about two miles from the Bank of England; the Mansion House station is but a few rods from the bank.

When the train drew up at the Mansion House station, Chick looked out of the window.

He sat back with a smile.

The black whom he had seen opposite the bank was on the platform with a grip in his hand.

"Nick was right when he said the fellow was sharp," thought Chick. "He has guessed that I've got the diamond, and that I am going to Paris by this train. We shall cross the channel by the same boat. I'll keep my eyes out for him."

The run to Dover was without incident.

Chick went at once to the steamboat waiting at the end of the railroad line.

He saw the black man standing near the gangway.

After Chick had gone on board the black followed.

The detective went to the forward part of the boat, and the black stayed aft.

During the short voyage across the channel, Chick several times walked past the place where the black was sitting.

Not once did the black seem to see him.

"Quiet-looking chap," thought Chick, "but I suppose there's loads of fight in him."

The strange man's quiet behavior did not make Chick careless. He was on his guard every moment against surprises.

Nothing happened, however, on the way across the channel, and the railway journey to Paris was equally quiet.

Chick arrived at about six in the evening.

There was no train to take him further until midnight.

He had supper in a restaurant near the station, and then strolled to the Grand Boulevard for the sake of killing time.

The black had not been seen since his arrival.

Chick had seen him leave the train and go rapidly from the station, and that seemed to be the last of him.

"It's just possible," thought Chick, "that he hasn't any interest in me or the diamond."

It had come to be about nine o'clock. The boulevard was alive with people, and Chick was walking slowly along enjoying the sight.

An old man just ahead of him slipped and fell.

Quickly the detective was beside him, helping him to rise.

"I hope you're not hurt, sir," said Chick.

The old man looked at him wonderingly.

"Oh!" added Chick, speaking in French now, "I beg pardon. I forgot that I was in France. I hope you are not hurt?"

"No, monsieur, thank you very much," replied the old man.

He hobbled away, and Chick stood watching him for a moment, fearing that he might stumble again.

"Sir! sir! one moment, please!"

The words were in English, but with a slight accent, and the voice was that of a woman.

Chick had no reason to think that they were meant for him, but he turned about curiously.

A cab stood at the curb near him.

In it was a handsome young woman, dressed in the height of fashion.

She was looking at him with great anxiety.

"Sir," she repeated, pleadingly, "may I speak to you one moment?"

The detective lifted his hat and advanced.

"I heard you use English," she said, when he stood close to the cab, "and I thought I could appeal to you. You are probably an Englishman, or, perhaps——"

"American, mademoiselle," he admitted.

"Oh! I am so thankful!" she cried. "I am in such trouble, sir, and I know that a gallant American gentleman will not fail to help me. You will, will you not, sir?"

"If it is in my power, certainly," answered Chick.

"Thank you a thousand times. You must think it very strange that I should have the boldness to address you, but I must be even bolder. Will you get into the cab with me, and let me explain as we go along?"

Chick smiled, and took out his watch.

"It will not take half-an-hour!" she cried.

"Very well," said he, "if that is the limit, and I can do anything, I shall be glad to do so. You mustn't think me impolite, but I have the business of others to attend to, and must leave Paris at midnight."

So saying, he was getting into the cab.

"You shall not be detained one minute beyond a half-hour at the most," she declared, positively. "I take it for granted that you are familiar with the laws of your country."

"Some of them, mademoiselle."

"Madame, if you please, sir. I am married, and

that is what is the matter. You know the laws of marriage?"

"Why, after a fashion. You might state your difficulty, and I will see."

"Well, then, I was in America last year, and I married there a gentleman who is honorable and worthy in every way. His business did not permit him to come with me to France when I came home two weeks ago for a visit. My parents were surprised at my marriage, and now they claim that it was no marriage at all, and they want to force me to become the wife of a Frenchman."

"Dear me!" said Chick.

"We have had a great discussion at home. I have told my people that not only do I hate this Frenchman, but that a marriage with him would be illegal. They will not believe it unless I can bring an American who will assure them that I am right."

"You could go to the American consul in Paris," Chick began.

"I know," she interrupted, "and I have been there. The office is closed. I went to his house and found that he was away at the opera. I was in despair, for the matter must be settled at once. Then I happened to overhear you speaking in English, and you know the rest. I couldn't help appealing to you."

The cab had started the moment Chick got in, and was going along a street lined with fine hotels and residences.

"Well," said Chick, "I do not quite see what you want me to do. Your people are not likely to take the word of a stranger."

"They will if you will do what I ask."

"What is it?"

"Say that you knew me and my husband in America."

Chick smiled thoughtfully.

"Listen!" she cried, eagerly, seeing his hesitation. "my name is Yvette Gardner. My husband is Henry Gardner, of Philadelphia. You could have met him if you know——"

"I am afraid I can't go as far as that," Chick interrupted, "but if you have your marriage certificate I can assure your parents that it is in correct form."

"That will be better than nothing, sir."

"And to-morrow you can doubtless get the American consul to straighten the matter out."

"Ah, yes, to-morrow! Well, if you can only say something to-night that will make them postpone matters till to-morrow I shall be saved."

"I will do what I can."

"Good! here we are."

The cab stopped in front of an apartment house.

Yvette paid and dismissed the driver, and Chick went with her into the building.

She led him to a splendidly furnished parlor, and asked him to be seated.

He took a chair in the middle of the room.

"I will call my father and mother," said Yvette, in a husky, excited voice, as she went toward a door.

Just then Chick heard a rustling of curtains behind him.

He would have turned about but that Yvette suddenly faced him with a drawn revolver.

Her eyes blazed fiercely first on Chick and then on somebody who was behind Chick's chair.

"Stop!" cried Yvette, "I will shoot the first one of you who stirs!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FATE OF THE DIAMOND.

Chick sat still, smiling.

"Come around here," said Yvette to the man behind.

There were shuffling, unwilling steps, and Chick saw his black man.

He had a long dagger in his hand with which he had meant to kill the detective.

His eyes were fixed, half in fear, half in suspicion, on Yvette.

"Listen, both of you," said she, never lowering her weapon. "I shall waste no words. You," addressing Chick, "have in your possession a diamond that this black man wants. He engaged me to get it for him. Blood has been shed for that stone before now, and blood will be shed for it here if necessary. I advise you, Mr. Detective, to give it up without foolish resistance."

She paused.

"You've put up a pretty good job," said Chick. "I think I know when I'm beaten."

"You're a sensible man."

"I hope so."

"This is a self-cocking revolver, and it has a hair trigger. I rather like you, but I will shoot and take the risks if you don't hand over that diamond.

"I understand and believe you. Do you mean to give it to your dark-complexioned friend, or will you keep it yourself?"

"That is my affair!" she snapped.

"I thought so. Well, Yvette, I'm not fool enough to risk that hair trigger."

So saying, Chick took from the inside pocket of his vest a small box that he held toward Yvette.

At first she started to lower her weapon and take it.

Then she exclaimed:

"It may be empty."

Chick pressed the spring. Up went the cover of the box and revealed a flashing thing that made both woman and black man wild with excitement.

"It is mine!" cried Yvette, reaching for it.

As she spoke, she lowered her revolver arm.

Instantly the black leaped.

He tore the box from her hand just as she took it from Chick, and dashed for the door.

With a cry of rage she wheeled about.

Chick jumped and caught her arm, wresting away her weapon before she could fire.

"I wouldn't," he said, quietly. "The diamond isn't worth the chance of being guillotined for murder."

The black was now out of the door.

They heard him running down the stairs.

"Do you mean to let it go?" she demanded, frantically.

Chick held her firmly.

"The black man might kill me if I chased him," he answered.

"Pah!" she cried, "I supposed you were a brave man!"

"You saw how I surrendered to you."

She was trembling with rage and disappointment.

"I meant to get it and scare you both off till I could leave the room and lock you in," she gasped.

Then she began to cry, and Chick released her.

She sank into a chair.

"You played for a fortune and lost it, Yvette," said Chick. "I can't help feeling sorry for you, for you were really rather clever. You know I might have you arrested for what you have done."

"Oh!" she cried, looking up in terror.

"You see, you have made me lose the diamond."

"Oh! have mercy on me!" she pleaded.

"I will," replied Chick, "because it won't bring the diamond back if I have you punished. I shall now have to set the Paris police on the hunt for that black friend of yours, but I won't drag you into the scrape if I can help it. Good-night."

With that he left her looking at him with the greatest wonder and not a little fear. She did not dream that the detective had walked deliberately into the trap she set for him. He had suspected her from the start, and when she told her absurd marriage story he knew that she was scheming to get hold of the diamond.

Chick did not set the Paris police at work. He did not even ask anybody which way the black man went when he left the house.

Instead, he went without any hurry to the railway station, got into a sleeper and slept soundly till the following forenoon, when he was hundreds of miles from Paris.

And two days later he had the pleasure of delivering the wonderful diamond into the hands of the Roumelian Queen herself.

The thing that the black man had grabbed and run away with was a fake diamond made in imitation of the real thing.

Nick Carter had had three such fakes made in New York, and each of the detectives had one.

Patsy had tricked Pallog with his fake at one time, and Chick had used his most successfully, for it settled all the troubles about the stone.

This was proved first by the fact that since that

adventure in Paris nobody has tried to steal the crown diamond.

In the second place, about a year after this affair a friend of Nick's returned from a journey round the world. He was telling Nick of the strange things he had seen.

"In Borneo," he said, "I came across a tribe of savages who worship a diamond. Whenever they go to war the King marches his army around a field where there is a kind of altar, on which the diamond is placed. Every soldier looks at it, and after that it is said that the army fights with wonderful bravery."

"That's interesting," said Nick; "when was it you saw this?"

"About six months ago. But that isn't so interesting as the fact, which they told me, that a traveler had stolen the stone about a year previously. Two members of the tribe hunted him all over the world till one of them got the diamond again. The other lost his life fighting for it."

And Nick thought:

"Who would have supposed that a piece of nice cut glass would do for the savages just as well as the real thing that the Queen of Roumelia wears in her crown?"

When Chick reached London on his return from Roumelia he expected to find that Nick and Patsy had started for America ahead of him.

They were still there.

"It looks to me," said Nick, "as if we should have to spend some time in Russia. There's business there that needs somebody's attention at once."

What this business was and how the Carters attended to it, will be told in the next number of the weekly.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 270, will contain "Nick Carter and the Nihilists, or, The Mine Under the Grand Duke's Palace." How the Carters tracked the Nihilists and learned their secrets is an interesting and thrilling story. Read it in next week's issue.

FUN FOR EVERYBODY!

Of course every one of you know already who are the winners in this contest. Beside the announcement of the prize winners, on page 31, you will see the announcement of the new contest. Boys, you are all going to enter it. If you failed to enter the last contest don't be foolish again. If you entered and did not win a prize remember that prizes always come sooner or later to the boy who keeps on trying. If you won a prize you want another like it. We don't need to tell you to enter the new contest.

We have lots of entries in the old contest on hand yet—several thousand. They are all good, but of course we can't print them all. We print a few of the best, however, this week.

A Drummer's Yarn.

(By G. S. Mason, Virginia.)

Three drummers were one day talking about how fast the different trains went.

One said: "I was on the B. and O. not long ago and we went so fast that the telegraph poles looked like palings to a fence."

The next one said the Big Four went so fast that the telegraph poles looked like teeth to a fine-comb.

The third said, "That's nothing. I got on the Pennsylvania one day at Washington, and just as the train started off I stooped over to kiss my wife, and I, instead, kissed a cow ten miles down the road."

Fun at a Country Circus.

(By H. Burns, New York.)

"Come in and behold Melba, the most beautiful woman Snake Charmer, in the world!" cries the barker outside the side show.

"Your royal giblets," said a smart chap one of a small group at a country circus, "did'st ever see Weary Wiggins? Nay? Then be careful of thy statements, for he is something of a Snake Charmer himself."

"G'wan!" retorts the barker. "Wot yer givin' us? You wouldn't know a Snake Charmer if you saw one. Now, honest, did yer ever see one?"

"Well, you are very nearly the first I've ever seen," was the answer. "Your nose is your own aid, sir. You can provide your own snakes with a pint of whisky."

With that the group passed into the hut, leaving the angry barker to pour out his wrath on the perpetual crowd that there ever is at a circus. On entering the tent the smart one pounced upon a big fellow apparently a friend.

"Hello, Jim! Nice old gall you had out to sup last night after the opera. Theatrical dame, wasn't she? Belonged to the chorus, I should judge."

"What the dickens makes you think so?" demanded Jim, hardly phased. "Did she look like a chorus girl?"

"Well, she looked something like a chorus lady," chirped the smart one. "Somebody told me she lowered the curtain the night Lincoln was shot."

Jim stared while the others chuckled.

"You'll get salted some time!" growled the big fellow. "You need it, too, for you're awfully fresh."

"Sorry I can't say the same thing about the ancient maid you were blowing off to birds and fizz last eve, Jim, old mark," purred the smart one.

"She was simply an old flame of mine," asserted Jim. "I thought so when I saw her hair."

After Jim had informed him that he might "Go 'way back and sit down," the smart one started in to give a lecture on the wonders there assembled, and this he continued until they passed out.

Threc Jokes.

(By Wm. Rogers, Brooklyn.)

HE ONLY ASKED FOR THEIR EARS.

Some one threw a head of cabbage at an Irish orator while he was making a speech. He paused a second and said:

"Gentlemen, I only ask for your ears, I don't want your heads."

He was not bothered during the remainder of his speech.

BULL IN THE WELL.

Pat, who is being lowered into a well: "Sthop, will you, Murphy? I want to coom up agin."

Murphy, still letting him down: "Wphat for?"

Pat: "I'll show ye. Af ye don't sthop lettin' me doon, Oi'll cut the rope."

A THROUGH TRAIN.

Mr. McFaddle: "Let me off at Miketown."

Conductor: "We don't stop, this is a through train."

Mr. McFaddle: "Thin, please, sor, will ye stop long enough for me to tell Bridget that it's carried through I am."

An Englishman's Mistake.

(By Ralph Comstock, Pa.)

An Englishman who did not know the width of our country, came over here on his way around the world and stopped at New York. He got up in the morning, came downstairs in a hurry and said:

"Hurry up and get me a ticket to San Francisco on that six o'clock train—I want to get there by ten o'clock." Then he wondered why the men all laughed at him.

Breaking the News Easy.

(By Harry Goss, Pa.)

My Dear Harry: I have not herd anything of ye sens the last time I wrote ye. I moved from the place whare I now live or would of written before. I now take my pen in hand to inform you of the death of your own living uncle Si. He dide very suddenly after a long illness of 6 months. He lay a long time in convulsions, perfectly quiet and spachless and all the time asking for water. His age ye know as well as I. He was 45 years old last March lacking 14 months. If he had lived till now he have been dead 6 months just. I ask ye not to brake the seal of this letter until 2 or 3 days after ye have red it—for which time ye will be better prepared for the sorroful noose.

I. M. THRUE.

Write quick.

A Wayside Conversation.

(By Arthur Schacke, Minn.)

Several days ago, while Mr. Bibbs was attempting to go on horseback, from one mill to another, he lost his way in the "deep tangled wildwood," and after many hours of blind wandering, came upon an old fellow sitting on a log. His face wore an expression of comical laziness.

"Ah, my good man!" said Bibbs, "will you tell me the road to one of the Albion saw mills?"

"Which one?" the old fellow asked, looking up and squinting at the Englishman.

"Oh, it makes no difference whatever, I assure you."

"Then I don't reckon it makes any diffunce which road you take."

"Ah, now, you are very, very amusing."

"Yas, so is frogs."

"Well, now, really, I never noticed that, but since you have mentioned it, I doubt not that you are right. There are a great many things in nature that we never really notice until our attention is called to them, you know."

"Yas, an' that's whut the circuit jedge 'lowed, but the gran' jury kep' on a-fetchin' in the indictments."

"Ah," said the Englishman, adjusting his eyeglass and giving the squatter a searching look of inquiry.

"Reckon it is," said the squatter.

"Beg pardon, but what did you say?"

"M'y, you 'lowed 'ah,' an' I say I reckon it is."

"Yes, ah, very amusing, assure you. Now, will you tell me the way to either one of those mills?"

"Ain't got time."

"Why, it would not take long, I assure you."

"Wall, ef you know more about it than I do, you'd better go on."

"Well, now, really, this is extraordinary."

"Yas, that's whut the jedge 'lowed, but the jury fotch in a verdict of guilty."

"Well, well, you are the most amusing man I ever

met, but I do wish you would give me the information seek. Which road shall I take?"

"Do you see any road?"

"No, I—"

"Wall, then, how air you goin' ter take it?"

"Upon my word, you are exceedingly peculiar. How long have you lived in this community?"

"Come here when Nan was a baby."

"How old is Nan, permit me to ask?"

"Wall, ef she hadn't er died she'd a' been older than Betsy."

"Pray tell me how old Betsy is?"

"Not quite as old as Nan would 'a' been."

"Upon my word, you are an extraordinary man. You are a farmer, I presume."

"Kain't say I am."

"What is your calling, then?"

"Call hogs sometime, an' sometimes I don't call nothin'."

"What do you do for a living?"

"Eat sometimes, an' then ag'in I drink."

"Well, I must say you are the most peculiar man ever met."

"Neenter say it unless you want to. Ain't nobody a-shovin' you."

"Well, well," said the Englishman, giving him another searching look. "I am somewhat interested in you."

"Yas, that's what the wild turkey said when she picked up the June bug."

"Ha, ha, quite a fable, I assure you. But come, now tell me the way to the mill."

"Which one?"

"Either."

"What's that?"

"I say either."

"Reckon you'd better go on. Man come 'round here last fall an' said ither, an' the fust thing we knowed he'd done run away with a hoss."

"Well, did I ever hear the like."

"Don't know as you have. Don't know what you've hearn. Ain't never run with you none."

"Well, now, joking aside—"

"Ain't jokin' a side nur a back, nuther."

"Well, then, aside from joking, will you tell me the way to either one of those mills?"

"Come around some other time. I'm busy now."

"Look here, my good fellow, you are getting to be provoking."

"Yas, that's wut the lizard 'lowed when the saw log was drug over him."

The Englishman sought an easier position in his saddle, looked at the squatter, frowned perplexedly and then said:

"I have come here for the good of the community I—"

"Whur air you frum?"

"London, England."

"Which side of the railroad is it on?"

"Well, upon my soul!"

For several minutes afterward the Briton could say nothing more, and during his silence he seemed to be wondering whether or not to proclaim the old fellow a fool. After a while, appearing to have resolved to make

another effort, he said: "I have come here for the good of the community, and really deserve better treatment, even at the hands of an irresponsible native."

"Reckon you'll make more money outen the neighborhood then I will," the squatter replied. "You come in here and crowd the neighborhood."

"Crowd the neighborhood?" the Englishman exclaimed.

"Yas, that's whut you air doin'. All my life I have been crowded. Some time ago I lived way over yander"—waving his arm—"was gittin' along fust-rate till one mornin' I woke up an' found that another fellow had moved in."

"He didn't move into your house?"

"No, but he settled down not more'n five mile from me an' skeered the deer. I went to him an' axed him ter apologize, an' he wouldn't do it, an' then, ruther then ter be crowded, I left."

"Good-by," said Bibbs. "I won't crowd you any longer."

Sinful Pat.

(By R. C. Harrison, Ala.)

Two Irishmen went into a restaurant in this city recently, and upon being shown the bill of fare decided to order a small amount of meat and vegetables, and make the dinner off of mustard, which did not cost anything. Pat sampled it and presently began to weep.

"Pat," says Mike, "pwhat are yez wapin' for?"

"Oi am wapin' bacause me mither-in-law jist died," replied Pat. "Have some o' that."

Presently Pat noticed Mike weeping, and on inquiring the cause Mike responded:

"Shure, an' Oi am wapin' bacause yez didn't doie whin your mither-in-law did."

A Mathematical Joke.

(By Charles Holman, Jr., Brooklyn, N. Y.)

A boy entered a grocery store and said to the clerk:

"Take this order: Ten pounds of crackers at six cents; eleven pounds of flour at twenty-five cents; eight pounds of figs at thirty cents. Add that up. How much does that make?"

Clerk: "Five dollars."

Boy: "Are you sure?"

Clerk: "Of course I'm sure."

Boy: "Thanks; that's my arithmetic lesson for tomorrow."

A Bug Story.

(By Joel Strause, Baltimore, Md.)

Just as a traveler was writing his name on the register of a Leavenworth hotel a bedbug appeared and took its way across the page. The man paused and remarked:

"I've been bled by St. Joe fleas, bitten by Kansas City spiders, and interviewed by Fort Scott graybacks; but I'll be darned if I was ever in a place before where the bedbugs looked over the hotel register to find where your room was."

TRUE SAYINGS.

A mother down East was so kind that she gave her child chloroform before she whipped it.

Free speech is the brain of the republic.

No bird is actually on the wing. Wings are on the bird.

If you get the best whisky, whisky will get the best of you.

I know a young man who attends church regularly, and clasps his hands so tight during prayer time that he can't get them open when the contribution box comes around.

A Testimonial from the Editor.

(By James Johnson, Brooklyn.)

An inventor, having produced a wonderful hair invigorating fluid, sent a case of bottles to a bald editor with a request for a testimonial. He got it in these terms:

"A little applied to the ink stand has given it a coat of bristles, making a splendid penwiper at a small cost. We applied the lather to a twopenny nail, and the nail is now the handsomest shaving brush you ever saw, with beautiful soft hair growing from the end of it some five or six inches in length.

"Applied to doorsteps, it does away with the use of a mat.

"Applied to the floor, it will cause to grow therefrom hair sufficient for a brussels carpet.

"A little weak lather sprinkled over a shed makes it impervious to the wind, rain or cold. It is good to put inside children's cradles, sprinkle on the roadside, or anywhere where luxurious grass is wanted for use or ornament. It produces the effect in ten minutes."

A Few Laughs.

(By Henry Hofmeister, Baltimore.)

A careless young woman, in starting to leave a car, dropped her purse. A young man, who evidently intended to leave the car at the same time saw her drop her purse, picked it up and put it into his pocket.

But his action had not been unnoticed. Just as he stepped from the car, an elderly man gripped him by the arm and whispered:

"If you don't give that purse to the young lady this instant, I'll expose you."

"Yes, certainly!" gasped the astonished young man. Then, with a grin:

"I beg your pardon, Elizabeth; you dropped your purse."

"Oh, thank you, Jim," she replied, as she took it.

"I hope you are satisfied," said Jim, turning to the elderly man. "The lady is my sister."

The elderly man collapsed.

"Speakin' of twins," said the old man Chumpkins, "there was two boys raised in our neighborhood that looked just alike till their dyin' days. Lem didn't have any teeth, and his brother Dave did, but they looked perzactly alike all the same.

"The only way you could tell 'em apart was to put your finger in Lem's mouth, and if he bit yer 'twas Dave."

Stamp and Coin Department.

Each week in this department you will find a special article, either on stamps or coins. We also give an opportunity to our readers to make exchanges of coins as well as stamps through this department free of cost, and we will answer, in a special column, any questions our readers would like to ask on these subjects. Address all communications to the Stamp and Coin Department.

What is the Rarest Stamp.

The question is hard to answer. Even professional stamp collectors disagree on that point. Among the rarest are the New Haven stamps issued by that city before the general government began issuing postage stamps. They are valued at \$2,500. The issue of the Confederate States are rare and valuable, as are also those of Moldavia and the first issue of the Hawaiian Islands. The issues of the cities of St. Louis, Millbury, New Haven, Baltimore and Brattleboro are rare and worth from \$100 to \$1,500 each, according to the variety and peculiarity of the dies from which they were printed. The first issues of British Guiana and Mauritius are among the rarest in the hands of the philatelist. Another rare stamp is the "Connell" variety, which is a series issued by the postmaster-general of New Brunswick, Mr. Connell, who had his portrait on them. The home government ordered them destroyed.

The first postage stamp was issued by Great Britain in 1840. Brazil came next in 1843, Switzerland issuing a series later in the same year. In 1844 a number of countries began issuing stamps.

From 1845 to 1847 several cities in the United States issued stamps of their own to prepay postage on the mails; and in 1847 the United States began to issue them and the local stamps were withdrawn from circulation.

The different designs on postage stamps alone make them interesting. Every one recollects the issue of Columbian stamps, with representations of events in the discovery of America. As a rule, United States stamps bear the heads or busts of prominent statesmen, but other countries do not adhere to that rule. The stamps of Afghanistan bear a tiger's head, China a dragon's head; Liberia, elephant or rhinoceros; Australia, a swan; New South Wales, bird of paradise and ostrich; Newfoundland, fishing smack, seal, and codfish; Canada, beaver; Japan, peacock; India, square block; Perak, bounding tiger; Panama, map of the isthmus; Mexico, ship, stage, coach, burro, railroad train, peon; Victoria, queen on her throne; Chili, Columbus landing; Nicaragua, Columbus landing on Cat Island; New South

Wales, map of Australia. The early stamp of Moldavia has a rude head of a bull, surmounted by a star and resting on a hunter's horn for a design. The \$10 timbres or internal revenue stamps of Mexico, dated 1880, have a portrait of Inturbide in the center, surmounted by an eagle standing on a cactus with a snake in one claw and its bill.

The collecting of stamps seems to have passed the fad period and become a science, for men of wealth, culture and education are engaged in it, and large firms dealing exclusively in postage stamps have sprung into existence. Probably the richest collector in the world is Mr. Philip L. R. von Ferray, of Paris. He has a collection worth \$1,000,000.

CORRESPONDENCE.

S. C. D.—The Scott Stamp and Coin Company.

T. J. Morrissey.—Write to any reputable dealer in stamps.

Miss Katie Munn.—The half dollar you mention is worth about sixty cents. The Scott Stamp and Coin Company.

H. W.—Your eagle penny is worth one cent. You do not mention the date of the three and two-cent pieces you speak of.

Collector.—Most of the well-known coin and stamp companies could sell you specimens. Try the Scott Stamp and Coin Company.

B. T. M.—There is no premium upon the present issue of two-cent stamps. We will publish an article on the Pan American stamps in the near future.

J. B. W., Albany, N. Y.—The Scott Coin Co. will tell you the value of your 1797 cent. It is not particularly rare, and its market value depends principally on the anxiety of some collector to procure one. The twenty-cent piece of 1874 is worth \$5. That of 1875 is not so rare. Your Hawaiian ten cent piece is worth about its face value. You may obtain more for it, however, from some collector.

THE PRIZE WINNERS

The Editor of NICK CARTER WEEKLY takes great pleasure in announcing the winners in the recent contest. The popularity of the contest exceeded his most sanguine expectations, and, judging from the size of the mail that was every morning dumped on his desk, it seemed as if every boy in the United States had sent in his contribution. The articles literally poured in, and it was only by the most constant work that the judge were enabled to announce the result in this issue.

The winners of the First Prizes, who are each awarded a first-class, up-to-date banjo, are:

Charles Grissom, Denton, Texas.

Roy Newcomer, Elgin, Ill.

F. H. Nordstrom, 2117 South 9th St., Minneapolis, Minn.

The winners of the Second Prizes, who are each awarded a complete magic trick outfit, are:

Emil Newman, 1450 Fifth Ave., New York City.

Charles S. Wright, 334 Marion St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

E. F. Shutes, Bloomfield, Neb.

E. G. Parmley, Du Quoin, Ill.

John Tidd, Jr., Stoneham, Mass.

The winners of the Third Prizes, who are each awarded a pair of heavy, military regulation leggings, are:

John Ohrner, Jamestown, N. D.

Guy C. Thompson, Crawford House, Crawfordsville, Ind.

Thomas Williams, 357 Hilliard St., Atlanta, Ga.

R. P. Taylor, Ingalls, Okla.

George Halstrom, 111 Sixth St., East Cambridge, Mass.

Le R. Nelson, 209 Sweitzer St., Greenville, O.

Emil Jurgemeyer, Luzerne, Ia.

C. Pusateri, St. Joseph, Mo.

Leroy Freeman, 1919 Vermont Ave., Washington, D. C.

Joseph G. Fletcher, 78 Forbes St., Jamaica Plains, Mass.

Three cheers for the winners. Hats off to them all. They have had to work for their honors, and they have won on their merits.

If you do not see YOUR name in the above list, don't let that discourage you. Jump right into the new contest and try again for the prizes. You will never know how near your story came to winning a prize. Perhaps next time you will see your name among the lucky few.

NOTE TO PRIZE WINNERS.—If your full address does not appear after your name in the above list, you should send it at once to the editor of Nick Carter Weekly, in order that you may receive your prize promptly.

A SPLENDID PRIZE CONTEST.

It is to Laugh!

Of course you all like funny stories—the kind you have been reading lately in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. If you can write any like them send them in, that is if you want

**A FIRST RATE UP-TO-DATE BANJO,
A SPLENDID ALL-WOOL SWEATER,
OR LONG DISTANCE MEGAPHONES.**

3 First Prizes The three boys who send in the three funniest stories will each receive a first-class banjo. A beautiful instrument. Perfect and up-to-date in every detail. These banjos are warranted in every particular. They have 11-inch calf heads, walnut necks and veneered finger boards, with celluloid inlaid position dots, raised frets, twenty-four nickel brackets and wired edge. These instruments can be easily mastered, and every boy should jump at the opportunity to win one.

5 Second Prizes The five boys who send us the next funniest stories will each receive a Spalding all-wool sweater. Any color you choose. Guaranteed all wool and full shaped to the body and arms.

10 Third Prizes The ten boys who send us the next funniest stories will receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone, capable of carrying the sound of the human voice two miles.

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS:

This contest will close May 1st. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

To become a contestant for these prizes you must cut out the Prize Contest Coupon printed herewith; fill it out properly, and send it to NICK CARTER WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

Nick Carter Weekly Prize Contest No 2.

Date.....1902

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City or Town.....

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Title of Story.....

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